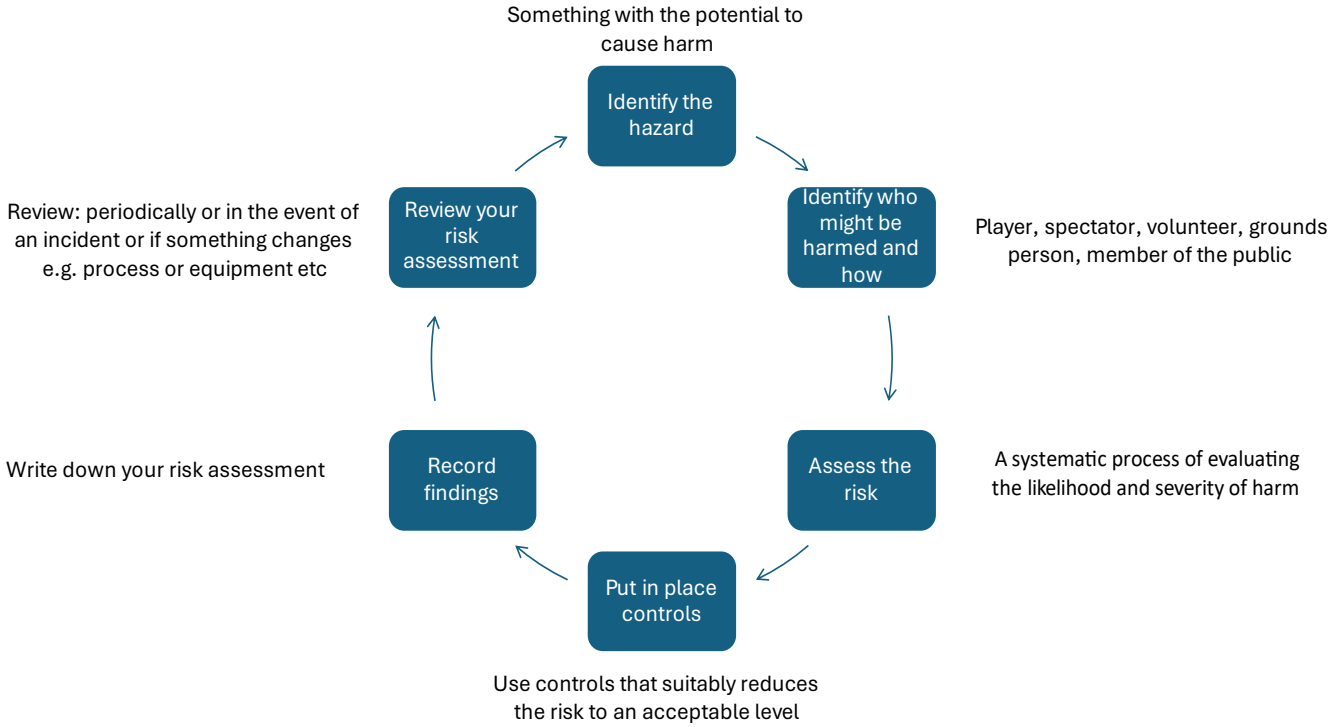
Risk Assessment

Health and Safety Guidance

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment provides the fundamental foundation on which health and safety management is founded and is an absolute requirement of several pieces of H&S legislation. Recreational clubs have a duty to identify risk and suitably protect their members and visitors. So, it is important we understand how a risk assessment is carried out.

HERE ARE YOUR STEPS TO GOOD RISK ASSESSMENT



1. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION – 'SOMETHING WITH THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE HARM'.

The first task is to identify hazards. When doing this using the pneumonic **PEST** may help when considering hazards caused by:

- your **P**eople,
- the **E**nvironment you work in (noise, vibration, weather, outside influence, nature etc),
- **S**tructures/Buildings and
- **T**asks that may include, machinery, tools, chemicals and other equipment.

Additionally, take into account non-standard operations, including responses to emergencies and individuals' attitude to risk.

Reviewing historical accident records and consulting machinery operator manuals may give you valuable pointers and referencing material safety data sheets can provide insights for identifying chemical hazards.

2. *Consider who might be harmed and how?*

Once you have identified the hazards think about who might be harmed. These might fall into easily identifiable groups e.g., club members, grounds staff, contractors, visitors, members of the public, players, spectators etc.

For each hazard you need to be clear how people may be harmed. The type and severity of harm may change with different people e.g., someone with and existing medical conditions may be harmed more severely. This will play a significant part in assessing the risk.

3. *Assess the risk – 'a systematic process of evaluating the likelihood and severity of harm.'*

Many different methods exist for assessing the level of risk, put simply it is the combination of the likelihood of and accident happening and the severity of harm that results.

This will guide you in assessing the level of risk i.e., if it is highly likely an accident will happen, and a fatality will be the result then this is a high level of risk. It is for you to use your experience and available evidence, such as accident records to decide.

Once assessed, some of the hazards may be deemed 'insignificant,' these hazards can be discarded and play no further part in your risk assessment.

Risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know, you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks. If you have previously experienced or have knowledge of an accident or near miss, then it becomes foreseeable and must be assessed.

4. *Control the risk.*

The level of risk will guide you in your next step, controlling risk. It will also help you to prioritise which risk to address first.

The greater risks may also require more time, effort, and resource to be spent to sufficiently control them.

It is accepted that not all risk can be eliminated, but you are expected to control the risk to an acceptable level, you are required to do what is reasonably practicable to achieve this.

Consider the following hierarchy:

- **Eliminate** the hazard - Do you need to use that hazardous chemical?
- **Reduce** the risk – Use mechanical aids to move bulky items and store them close to the point of use.
- **Isolate** the hazard – Keep things locked away. Separate and secure hazardous items like gas cylinders. Keep ladders away from unauthorised access.
- **Control** - Use managerial processes and controls to reduce the risk i.e., operate a lone worker process or train people in how to use the nets safely.
- **Personal Protective Equipmen**t - Only to be used when all other controls are not sufficient. i.e., Provide rubber gloves to protect against cleaning chemicals.

5. Record your findings.

It is important and useful to record your findings. Keep it simple, record only significant findings and concentrate on your controls.

Records can be used as proof of assessment but also as a useful tool for training and communication. A risk assessment template can be used for this purpose. Many are available through trade industries, others can be found on-line, the HSE risk assessment template and completed examples can be found here.

6. Review

It is useful to review your assessment periodically. It is recommended the timeline set for review is in line with the level of risk i.e., the higher the risk the more frequent your review. Other factors may prompt you to review, look at your risk assessment again and ask yourself:

- Have there been any significant changes in machinery, chemicals, procedures, location etc?
- Have your people reported a problem?
- Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?
- Can you simply make improvements?

A periodical review will demonstrate you are on top of things so make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

Type of risk assessments.

Generic

An assessment that looks at a specific type of hazard and applies it to all scenarios. This could be a specific chemical, general manual handling tasks or maybe noise.

Task Specific

This concentrates on all hazards presented in a specific task, e.g., if you are maintaining a mower this could involve the use of oils, tools, manual handling, contact with hot, sharp, or moving parts etc.

Dynamic

This is an assessment that is conducted on the job, looking at the situation and hazards as they are presented. An example might be; if a member of the public wonders into the hazardous area while range hitting is being conducted, do you continue or stop and inform the member of the public of the dangers and ask them to move away from the hazard? Because of the immediate nature of this type of assessment you are not expected to write it down, however, you might include this in future formal assessments.

Definitions

Accident

An unplanned, unwanted event that results in harm.

Near Miss

An unplanned, unwanted event that did not result in harm but if the conditions were slightly different could have.

So far as reasonably practicable

This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time, or trouble taken to resolve. However, you do not need to take action if it would be grossly disproportionate to the level of risk.